

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

www.orthodoxbutler.org

ADDRESS: 400 S. Sixth Avenue, Butler, PA 16001

PASTOR: Rev. Bogdan Gabriel Bucur

CONTACT: 724.287.6893 (church); 412.390.8208 (priest);

E-mail : frbogdan@orthodoxbutler.org

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

30 October 2011

On this day, we commemorate Hieromartyr Zenobius and his sister Zenobia, of Aegæ in Cilicia (+285); Apostles Tertius, Mark, Justus, and Artemas, of the Seventy (1st c.); Hieromartyr Marcian, Bishop of Syracuse (2nd c.); Martyr Eutropia of Alexandria (ca. 250); Martyr Anastasia of Thessaloniki (3rd c.). St. Stephen Miliutin (+1320), his brother Ven. Dragutin / Monk Theoctistus (+1306), and their mother, St. Helen (Jelena) of Serbia (+1316).

LIVING: Diane, Abie (Abraham), Sula, Bill, Norm, Fran, Dolores (Sipos), Leatrice (Totin), Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Karyn, Brian, Maria, Marius, Justin, Sara, Miguel, Christine, Lorine.

DEPARTED: priest James, George (Botsis), Eduard, Lance, Nancy, Petruța, Peter, Michael, William, Mariana, James, Mary Ann, Michael.

FIRST ANTIPHON

*It is good to give praise unto the Lord, and to chant unto Thy Name, O Most High! **R.:** Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!*

*To proclaim in the morning Thy mercy, and Thy truth by night! **(R.:)***

*Upright is the Lord our God and there is no unrighteousness in Him **(R.:)***

*Glory... Now and ever... **(R.:)***

SECOND ANTIPHON

The Lord is King, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength and hath girt Himself! (R.:) Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"!

For He established the world which shall not be shaken! (R.:)

Holiness befits Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days! (R.:)

Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son and Word of God ...)

AT THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ! Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee: "Alleluia"!

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION (Tone 3): Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad; for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm. He hath trampled own death by death and became the first-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depth of Hades, granting the world great mercy.

Glory...

TROPARION OF SAINT ANTHONY (Tone 4, Russian): Like the zealous Elijah thou didst become, and followed John the Baptist in his upright ways. A dweller in the wilderness, thou didst steady the world by prayer. O Father Anthony, intercede with Christ our God for our souls' salvation.

Now and ever ...

KONTAKION FOR ORDINARY SUNDAYS (Tone 4): O undisputed intercessor of Christians, the mediatrix who is unrejected by the Creator, turn not away from the voice of our petitions, although we be sinners. Come to us in time with aid, as we cry unto thee in faith; for thou art good. Hasten to us with intercessions O Theotokos, who dost ever intercede for those who honor thee.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *Sing praises to our God, sing praises!
Clap your hands, all you nations!*

The Reading is from the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Galatians
(Galatians 1:11-19)

Brethren, I would have you know that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

Saint Paul was *not* one of the twelve disciples of our Lord. In fact, he never even met Jesus during His earthly ministry. Moreover, in the early years of the Church, Paul (then called Saul) did his best to stop the spreading of the faith, preaching against those who called Jesus "Messiah" (in Greek "Christ") and "Lord," and putting all his time and energy into persecuting the Church. When the authorities executed St. Stephen, the first deacon and martyr, Saul was guarding the clothes of those throwing stones!

Although blind, Paul's zeal was genuine. And since God knows the heart of man, and never fails to guide those that search earnestly for His truth, at a certain moment in God's time, something extraordinary happened. In St. Paul's words, God "revealed his Son to him." Paul *did* meet the Lord—on the way to Damascus, he had a vision, an overwhelming encounter with the resurrected Jesus Christ. And it was this meeting that established him as an apostle, and a divinely authorized preacher of the Gospel.

But many were skeptical about the Gospel preached by this man (now baptized “Paul”). They kept insisting that he had not received a commission from Christ—like the other apostles—or from Peter, the leader of the apostles, or from James, the leader of the Mother-Church in Jerusalem. Yet Paul knew what he had received from Christ: “the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.”

And this special commissioning of St. Paul has borne rich fruit: it is to him and to his disciple, St. Luke, that we owe most of the New Testament; it is he that showed the importance of sharing the Good News with the pagans; it is he that crisscrossed Europe to found its first Christian communities; and he ended his life in martyrdom together with St. Peter, in 64 C.E., at Rome.

Whether “cradle Orthodox” or converts to the faith, we are called, like St. Paul, to allow Christ to be revealed in us, and to gradually learn how to live as His disciples. Nobody ever said it is easy; but we can all take the advice that the same Apostle Paul gave to one of his spiritual sons: *Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am first!* (1 Tim 1:15)

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Luke

(Luke 16:19-31)

The Lord said: "There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he called out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you

may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead.'"

It is easy to blame the rich man in this story: he shares nothing with poor Lazarus, he does not care for his sick and dying fellow-human, he is a monster! And yet, judging things on a strictly social and political level, the rich man may have some sort of justification. After all, some would say, the rich man was not responsible for the poverty and sickness of Lazarus; besides, Lazarus should be grateful for the crumbs he is getting! But the story requires us to approach it differently.

As always with parables in the Gospel, we are called to ask ourselves: who are *we* in this story? The answer has nothing to do with the amount of money one has accumulated, or one's social status. Theologically speaking, *all of us*—rich and poor, men and women, citizens and foreigners, etc— are Lazarus. In relation to God, we are all a Lazarus, suffering from the incurable sickness of mortality, covered with the boils of sinful and destructive habits, barely alive through our own choice of separating ourselves from the divine source of life. Now, since God is not responsible for our fallen state, could he not just tolerate us, the way the rich man tolerates the poor who eats crumbs from his table? But God shows us a different way.

He does not ask whether we "truly deserve" a better state; in dealing with our shortcomings, as the Psalmist says, He does not keep score: "If You should mark our iniquities, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness." And, unlike the rich man in the parable, God does not feed us mere crumbs. Remember the invitation we receive on Pascha night: *"You that have kept the fast, and you that have not, rejoice today, for the table is richly laden! The calf is a fatted one, let no one go away hungry! Enjoy all the riches of His goodness! Let no one grieve at his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again; for forgiveness has risen from the grave."*

If we refuse to be like God, we automatically separate ourselves from Him, and choose the same miserable hell as the foolish rich man. God does not wish for this; therefore He sets before us many opportunities to share with others the gifts that we ourselves have so richly received from Him.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Saturday, Nov. 5: Vespers, 6pm, followed by Intro to Orthodoxy.

Sunday, Nov. 6: Matins, 9:15, Divine Liturgy, 10:00
STUMP THE PRIEST!

Saturday, Nov. 12, 1-6 PM: Education Day for Adults.

While teaching our children, we should also be mindful of the fact that grown ups are also in need of learning more about Orthodoxy. We will have two "lectures" of sorts, with a break in between, and then questions and answers. The day will end with the service of Vespers. The point is that we all make some progress in our understanding of the faith. [To those of us have children: let us find a common solution, so that all adults can participate for the entire length of the afternoon].

Sunday Nov. 13, 10 AM: Pan-Orthodox Divine Liturgy at Sts. Peter and Paul (Ukrainian Church). This being the Sunday before the beginning of the Nativity Fast, there will also be a luncheon, starting 12:00. Prices: \$10 for adults, \$5 for children ages 6-12, and children under age 6 free. Deadline for purchasing of the tickets is Sunday, November 6.

Saturday, Nov. 19: 3 ON 3 BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT. Open to boys and girls, two age divisions (8-10 and 11-13 years old). Fee: \$30 per team. Ukrainian Hall (21 Evergreen Street, Lyndora, PA 16045). Registration Deadline: Saturday, November 12.